

# People power

Fuelling your growth through talent and skills



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## Research methodology

Research was conducted by Censuswide and took place between April and May 2018. The sample included 1,000 respondents, classified as senior decision-makers within their business in the UK.

Censuswide abides by, and employs members of, the Market Research Society, which is based on the ESOMAR principles.

## What is a high-growth business?

High-growth businesses were respondents that cited in the survey that their turnover had increased by 20% or more in the last year. They also reported consistent growth over the last three years.

## Supporting data from previous research by Grant Thornton

Source materials referenced include 'Planning for growth' (March 2018), 'Generation apprentice' (March 2018) and 'Vibrant Economy Index' (April 2018).

# About the report

The success of a business depends on its people. That's as true now as it ever was. Knowing how best to find, keep and future-proof your workforce is a mammoth challenge for employers – made even more difficult by the rapid technological change and modern working environment.

In our 'Planning for growth' research released earlier this year, we found that high-growth businesses identify talent and skills as both a key accelerator and barrier for growth. It's firmly on their agenda and should be in all businesses. So, what should CEOs and human resources directors do to create winning workforces and unleash the power of their people? This research sets out to provide some answers.

The report is structured around four key challenges:

**Challenge one: Finding people with the mindset to drive growth now and in the future**

How can you think more innovatively to attract a diverse talent pool that will bring variety of thought, ideas and experience to your business?

**Challenge two: Competing for in-demand talent**

How can you compete effectively against more established players that often aggressively target scarce talent?

**Challenge three: Keeping talent and skills in a rapid growth environment**

How can you approach talent development so it is aligned to the skills needed for the future growth of your business?

**Challenge four: Equipping your people to be more than machines**

How can you help future-proof your people and business by cultivating broader skills?

We know that there isn't a simple, one-size-fits-all solution to the enormous task facing employers. But we hope this report provides plenty of insights and inspiration from the mid-market that will help you empower your people to unlock growth in your business.

If you'd like to discuss any points or challenges that the report covers, please get in touch. We'd be delighted to share our thoughts and experiences of advising businesses on how to accelerate growth through people with you.



**Keely Woodley**

Partner, Human Capital

# People power – a summary

From Grant Thornton's recent 'Planning for growth' report, we found that high-growth businesses see talent and skills as an important area for investment and a key accelerator for growth. In fact, for these businesses talent and skills is, alongside technology, the biggest accelerator for growth. This is in contrast to non-high-growth businesses, where talent and skills does not even appear in the top five priority areas for investment.

So we decided to dig a little deeper and conducted further research to understand more about how high-growth businesses' view and manage talent. This data presents a picture of the attitudes of high-growth businesses to talent and skills and outlines the challenges faced by dynamic, mid-market businesses.

## Recruiting for in-demand talent and skills

Compared with other businesses, high-growth organisations believe that identifying and recruiting talent is more of a challenge.

### Challenge one: Finding people with the mindset to drive growth now and in the future

Following traditional recruitment routes that focus on academic achievement and work experience can mean you overlook people with the ideal mindset for growth. How can you think more innovatively to attract the growth mindset that will deliver value to your business?

### Challenge two: Competing for in-demand talent

For mid-market businesses driving growth, recruitment can be fiercely competitive. Larger, more established players aggressively target scarce talent pools. What can you do to compete effectively for talent?



**92%** of high-growth businesses say they'll need people with skills that are not currently in the business within the next five years



**75%** of high-growth businesses say that recruiting talent is a challenge, compared with 59% of other businesses



**94%** of high-growth businesses say identifying and recruiting new talent is vital for the future growth of their business



**88%** of high-growth businesses expect an increase in competition for talent in the next year



**1 in 2** of high-growth businesses say it's hard to find people with the right skills

1 High-growth businesses are respondents who cited their company turnover as having grown by more than 20% in the last year and who had experienced consistent growth for the last three years

## The role of skills development in retaining talent

### Challenge three: Keeping talent and skills in a rapid growth environment

One way to secure the loyalty of your talent is by investing in ongoing development opportunities. How can you approach your people's development so it's aligned to the skills needed for the future growth of your business?

The people high-growth businesses value are in demand. So these organisations are very aware of their retention rates, making efforts to offer skills training to provide a competitive and attractive workplace to encourage people to stay.



More than a third of high-growth businesses say retaining talent is a challenge



High-growth businesses are far more aware of retention rates than the average – **96%** know how long the average employee stays compared with 61% overall

### Skills development is a top investment area for high-growth businesses:



offer some kind of skills development training to their people



offer their people training for skills relevant to their jobs



train their people for skills they'll need in the future



plan to update their training in the next 12 months

## Skills for future growth

### Challenge four: Equipping your people to be more than machines

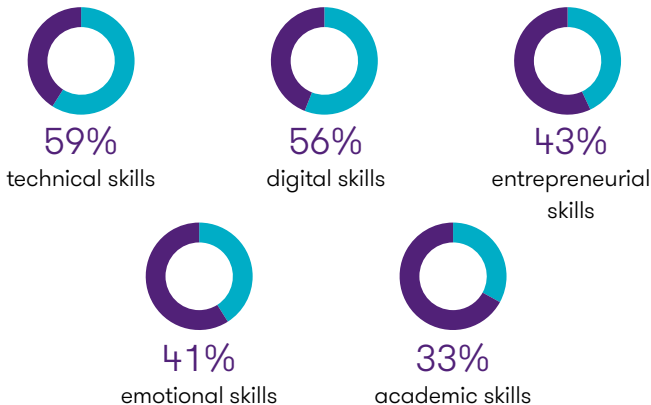
The workplace of the future needs people who have the specialist technical skills to develop and manage technologies that help business function. But it also needs people who think creatively, show empathy, work as a team and adapt quickly to change. How can you future-proof your people and business by cultivating broader skills?

While employers are most likely to invest in technical and professional skills, there is an increase in tech-proof skills training.

### Skill areas for which UK employers offer formal or informal training:

	Average response
Technical and professional	57%
Collaboration and teamwork	41%
Critical thinking and problem-solving	37%
Effective communication	27%
Adaptability and resilience	23%
Initiative and entrepreneurialism	20%
Self-awareness	18%
Curiosity and imagination	15%
Empathy	10%

### UK employers say the most valuable skills for building a future career are:

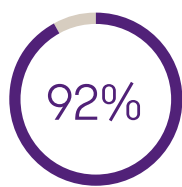


## Challenge one

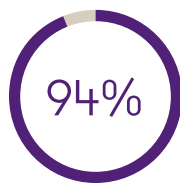
# Finding people with the mindset to drive growth now and in the future

Following traditional recruitment routes that focus on academic achievement and work experience can mean you overlook top people with the ideal mindset for growth. A growth mindset comprises attributes like creativity, empathy and entrepreneurialism, as well as the ability to work effectively with a team and to adapt quickly to change.

### The high-growth business view:<sup>2</sup>



say they'll need people with skills that are not currently in the business within the next five years



say identifying and recruiting new talent is vital for the future growth of their business



1 in 2 say it is hard to find people with the right skills

## How can you think more innovatively to attract the growth mindset talent that will grow your business?

Those with the right mindset can receive training to update technical skills, but those without it are far less likely to drive growth, regardless of their technical qualifications.

So it's important to consider all sources when recruiting new people so that you don't miss out on the talent available. Accessing alternative talent pools means thinking laterally about where and how you recruit new people. This could mean reskilling staff internally, rethinking your recruitment criteria or

widening the scope of your recruitment efforts. For example, collaborating with groups that support returning parents, ex-service personnel or refugees can be good ways to find high-potential people.

Attracting and developing talent from diverse backgrounds has commercial value because it creates a greater variety of ideas that leads to, for example, greater innovation.

### The Center for Talent Innovation found that the most diverse organisations are:<sup>3</sup>



75%

more likely to have a marketable idea implemented



70%

more likely to capture a new market



45%

more likely to improve market share

<sup>2</sup> Censuswide survey of 1,000 employers, Grant Thornton, 2018

<sup>3</sup> 'Innovation, diversity and market growth', Center for Talent Innovation, September 2013



## The commercial benefit of diversity and inclusion

Creating a future-proof, diverse workforce is not only good for business, it's an urgent and ongoing priority for the future of a vibrant economy. Several independent studies offer a compelling commercial argument for diversity and inclusion:

- Our **Vibrant Economy Index**<sup>4</sup> highlights that the most prosperous regions in the UK are those with top-ranking scores for 'inclusion and equality'.
- A **McKinsey report**<sup>5</sup> found that firms in the top quartile for gender diversity are 15% more likely to outperform firms in the bottom quartile for gender diversity. The same trend applied to ethnic diversity, where those in the top quartile were 35% more likely to perform better.



“The prospect of Brexit is increasing competition for diverse talent and creating uncertainty for EU employees. Organisations should consider a range of options

to remain competitive in the talent market, such as positioning yourself as an employer of choice through a strong purpose and vision, improving your current employment practices, creating robust and effective engagement plans and developing domestic talent through opportunities such as the Apprenticeship Levy.”

Justin Rix, Partner  
Talent Solutions, Grant Thornton



## Case study

### Promoting opportunity and diversity through social mobility

Grant Thornton

In 2013, we changed how we recruit trainee talent to provide equal access to our firm for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. We removed academic entry requirements for trainee talent programmes. We also provided support during the recruitment process to help candidates find the right job through:

- professional one-to-one career coaching
- introduction of online peer-to-peer support
- removal of weighting around extracurricular activities and work experience (where access to money and connections would have an influence).

The result of this was to give us a robust process for recruiting the right people with the right potential to grow themselves and our business.

In 2016, the Bridge Group (a charitable policy association researching and promoting socioeconomic diversity and equality in the UK) independently analysed 20,000 of our trainee candidates and validated that:

- we had positively increased the socioeconomic diversity of our trainee intake and had no adverse impact on students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds
- trainees with lower traditional academic results were performing at the same level or better than those who would have met our previous academic requirements.

<sup>4</sup> 'Vibrant Economy Index: A new way to measure success', Grant Thornton, April 2018

<sup>5</sup> 'Diversity Matters', McKinsey, February 2015





## Case study

### Building the skills you need from within your organisation

#### Cyber-security specialists, Grant Thornton

Breaches in cyber security have become one of the most significant threats to global business in 2018 and beyond. According to Cabinet Office estimates,<sup>6</sup> the cost to UK businesses of intellectual property theft alone through cyber crime is £9.2 billion per annum. Forty-three percent of businesses reported suffering cyber-security breaches or attacks in the last year.<sup>7</sup> And according to recent estimates, the growing shortage of available skills to support cyber security will result in a shortage of 1.8 million professionals by 2022.<sup>8</sup>

Like all organisations, we have a responsibility to protect the data we hold on our own people and on clients. We also have a responsibility to raise awareness with our clients of the risks they face. To meet the rapidly growing demands for cyber-related services both within our own business and from clients, we introduced a programme aimed at improving the overall level of knowledge of cyber security among our client-facing teams. The programme is also identifying people with the potential and aptitude to attend the Grant Thornton Cyber Academy to retrain as cyber-security specialists.

We have developed a high-level assessment of cyber vulnerabilities to help clients get a basic understanding of their risk exposure, and the cyber academy is currently

training around 300 of its people to deliver it. To identify aptitude and appetite from people within the firm, we decided to offer those undergoing the training access to an online cyber-security training platform called Immersive Labs.

Immersive Labs uses gamification to spot potential talent in the cyber-security field and develop it. It identifies individuals who have a natural aptitude for analytical thinking, problem-solving and research. The platform also removes any unconscious bias and is aimed at users with no prior experience or technical knowledge. There is a leader board within the platform so that those who are engaged and have the aptitude can be easily identified when the firm has a need to hire more cyber-security specialists.

We are also using this approach to cast the net outside the business. Grant Thornton is also a sponsor of Immersive Labs' Digital Cyber Academy, which offers free access to the platform for college and university students studying in the US, UK, Australia and Singapore and also for military veterans in the UK. Plans are under way to roll out free training for specific groups to increase diversity. Through our partnership with Immersive Labs, we are able to identify and recruit individuals with the potential to fill the cyber-security skills gap.

#### Things to consider when finding people with a mindset for growth:

- Have you conducted a residency audit to understand who in your workforce is likely to be affected by the legislation changes under Brexit?
- Who in your business has the right mindset and potential to develop the skills you need for growth?
- How diverse is your workforce? Challenge traditional recruitment routes – where could you be looking for new talent?
- Are you taking measures to eliminate unconscious bias in your recruitment process? What measures could you take to promote equal access to the opportunities you offer?
- Have you got the right development resources in place to upskill all your people – from entry level to the senior leadership team?

<sup>6</sup> 'The Cost of Cyber Crime', Detica and Cabinet Office, Detica, 2011

<sup>7</sup> 'Cyber Security Breaches Survey 2018', Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, April 2018

<sup>8</sup> '2017 Global Information Security Workforce Study', Center for Cyber Safety and Education and (ISC)<sup>2</sup>, Frost & Sullivan, 2017



## Challenge two

# Competing for in-demand talent

For mid-market businesses driving growth, recruitment can be fiercely competitive. Larger, more established players often aggressively target scarce talent, particularly in areas of specialist or emerging skills.

### What can you do to compete effectively for talent?

We have seen from many high-profile business failures in recent months that standing still is not an option and can in fact lead to corporate decline if left unchecked. So business leaders must continually scan the horizon in order to develop innovative talent strategies that fuel growth and productivity. Businesses should leverage a strong vision and purpose, as well as consider 'earn as you learn' schemes looking to recruit top young talent through apprenticeship offerings.

#### The high-growth business view:<sup>9</sup>



75%

of high-growth businesses say that recruiting talent is a challenge, compared with 59% of other businesses



88%

of high-growth businesses expect an increase in competition for talent in the next year

### Focus on culture, vision and purpose

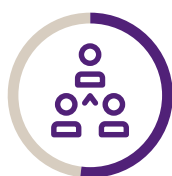
Increasingly, culture and purpose will be key to attracting talent. It's clear that it's a major draw for Millennials. According to recent research by ManpowerGroup,<sup>10</sup> by 2020 Millennials will make up over a third of the global workforce. In a survey of 16-25-year-olds, we found that though this age group still want competitive remuneration and good career prospects, many also want to feel that work has meaning and purpose.

#### Top four attributes that 16-25-year-olds say are the most important in prospective employers:<sup>11</sup>



56%

fair salary and  
benefits



52%

offers a clear future  
career path



30%

responsible and  
ethical



25%

makes a difference  
to society

<sup>9</sup> Censuswide survey of 1,000 employers, Grant Thornton, 2018

<sup>10</sup> 'Millennial Careers: 2020 Vision', ManpowerGroup, 2016

<sup>11</sup> OnePoll survey of 1,000 16-25-year-olds, Grant Thornton, 2018



## Case study

### Using purpose to attract top talent



**Shape more than just your career,**  
Richard Waite, Head of Resourcing,  
Grant Thornton

At Grant Thornton, our purpose is to ‘shape a vibrant economy where people and business can thrive’. Our people, in particular our

trainees, will shape the future of our business. We want to make sure that the people that join us share that vision and are living and breathing the values that we want to see across the whole firm.

We redesigned our whole candidate journey around our firm’s purpose, helping shape a vibrant economy, to ensure that by the time candidates become new joiners they understand and are excited by the difference they can make at our firm. To achieve this the resourcing team started from scratch, designing a candidate journey that is completely aligned to our purpose. Working with the brand and marketing team, the market-facing campaign ‘Shape more than just your career’ was developed, with language and aspirations supporting the firm’s overall brand.

The campaign aims to demonstrate that we offer both a fulfilling career and an opportunity to have a wider impact on society. The core messages are that the firm offers people a chance to have their opinions heard and their ideas implemented. People are given the freedom to be themselves and to make a difference. The campaign also highlights how our culture of collaboration means people share ideas and take responsibility for making them happen.

#### Results

We are seeing the benefits of this approach, particularly in trainee recruitment where engagement with our purpose is highest.

- We are being distinctive and bolder in how we talk about ourselves and what we stand for. As a result, we are seeing more engagement from candidates who have also applied to other big professional services firms. Candidates are now seeing a truly distinctive employer proposition brand from us and are therefore preparing more and actively prioritising their application with us.
- Candidates now clearly know what we stand for. They are connecting with the purpose on an intellectual and emotional level and are therefore able to shine at the final round of recruitment as a result. Conversion rates from the final stage of our trainee recruitment process – a candidate experience day – increase from 55% in 2016 to 72% in 2017. This resulted in reduced costs, saving 900 chargeable hours of assessment.
- Operational efficiency has increased. With the same internal resourcing team and the same budget, trainee hires increased from 360 in 2016 to 470 in 2017.
- New people joining the firm are more engaged and enthusiastic about working for us. The energy and passion for our purpose from new hires means they are helping to drive forward the changes we want to see in our culture, helping us to evolve from a traditional accounting firm into a future-fit, purpose-led organisation.



“Job seekers today behave like consumers, visiting on average seven different job sites and reading six to seven reviews before forming an opinion about an organisation. Candidates expect a level of transparency and authenticity, so they want to hear from real people working at an organisation.”

Joe Wiggins, Head of Corporate Communications EMEA, Glassdoor

## Attracting young talent

In addition to considering your culture and purpose as an organisation, there are other approaches that will particularly appeal to young talent. With rising costs of living and university education, it's easy to see why earn-as-you-learn routes into higher education are becoming more attractive to talented young people. Apprenticeship training equips people with relevant skills that will better prepare them for the rapidly changing world of work.

Offering paid-work experience or gap-year placement programmes underpinned by a clear career pathway can be a huge draw for entry-level talent. This is most effective when supported by a programme of continuous learning as people progress in their careers.

The introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy and wider changes to the apprenticeship system present an opportunity for organisations to develop their entire workforce. Grant Thornton has supported over 2,000 organisations in doing this and has seen perceptions quickly shift from dismissing the levy as a tax to valuing the opportunities it presents and starting to use apprenticeships as part of a wider people strategy for recruitment and upskilling.



### The employee perspective: The value of earn while you learn

Amy Magistris, IBM

Amy is a degree apprentice at IBM. She describes her experience at IBM as she balances completing the three-year degree apprenticeship and a four-year BSc Digital and Technology Solutions degree.

“When I was in my final year studying A levels (Computing, Design Technology and Physics). I absolutely had no idea what direction my life could take, other than I wanted to do something with technology – not much to go on given the scale of the industry.

“I became aware that IBM has schemes in place for people in my position. I applied for the gap-year scheme where you work and earn for a year while experiencing the technology industry first-hand.

“Being at IBM created amazing opportunities for me. I was involved in a project to create a newspaper app for a top UK university, met the general manager of IBM UK and had the opportunity to take the degree apprenticeship (DA).

“I’m currently completing a three-year apprenticeship and a four-year BSc Digital and Technology Solutions degree simultaneously. The DA consists of four years fully sponsored at Queen Mary University of London, studying both

business- and technology-based modules, as well as working and earning at IBM. Not only does this route to a degree qualification leave me debt free, once my apprenticeship is complete I can continue to build my professional career at IBM. I am three years into my DA and I have already accomplished a great amount. I have achieved a first in my third-year exams and I am in my most challenging and rewarding role so far at IBM – a front-end developer and designer in the Rapid Prototyping team where I am encouraged to build my technical and communication skills. This is something I’ve been eager to do since joining IBM in 2014. From the time when I rejoined IBM for the DA, I’ve been given even more opportunities. I have been part of IBM’s first team to make it to the Brathay Challenge Final, travelled around Europe for design thinking and architecture workshops and have had the unique opportunity to work directly with four clients on a 10-week end-to-end project delivering tangible and virtual solutions.

“Through my apprenticeship with IBM, I have the balance of university learning and student life whilst also putting my knowledge into practice and becoming a respected professional.”

### Things to consider when competing for in-demand talent:

- What specialist or high-demand skills does your business need to grow now and for the future?
- Are you making the most of your Apprenticeship Levy payments?
- Does your employer brand and candidate experience match the reality of working for your business?
- What changes can you make to ensure candidates get an authentic picture of the opportunities and culture they can expect when working for your organisation?

## Challenge three

# Keeping talent and skills in a rapid growth environment

Finding people can be time-consuming and expensive. So once you have them, how do you increase the chances of keeping them? According to estimates by Oxford Economics,<sup>12</sup> when taking into account loss of output and recruitment logistics, the true cost of replacing a single employee is over £30,000. One way to secure the loyalty of your most valued talent is by investing in ongoing development opportunities.

The most valuable qualifications that employers can encourage their employees to gain are those that are portable and externally authenticated. This requires a degree of trust on the part of the business as these are the very qualifications that make employees more valuable in the broader market.

Businesses need to understand how best to support employees on their learning journey, and this can often be through partnering with experienced training providers to provide a superior learning experience.

### The high-growth businesses approach:<sup>13</sup>



of high-growth businesses are far more aware of retention rates than the average –  
**96%** know how long the average employee stays compared with 61% overall



More than a third of high-growth businesses say retaining talent is challenging



**96%**

offer some kind of skills development training to their people



**94%**

equip their people for skills they'll need in the future



**90%**

plan to update their learning and development in the next 12 months

<sup>12</sup> 'The Cost of Brain Drain', a report for Unum, Oxford Economics, February 2014

<sup>13</sup> Censuswide survey of 1,000 employers, Grant Thornton, 2018



## Executive recruiter view



**Kit Bingham, Partner, Odgers Berndtson**

“Few people now expect to spend their career as a one-company ‘lifer’ while the rapid pace of technological change and an

impatience for results can also contribute to high rates of management churn.

“The average tenure for a quoted company chief executive in the UK is now less than five years, for example, rarely enough time to have a decisive impact on a business. Leaders of high-growth businesses, and their HR teams, would do well to put retention at the heart of their talent policies.

“It is widely reported that Millennials, the leaders of the future, seek to balance a variety of career goals – pay and benefits, certainly, but also lifestyle, mentorship and development, values alignment and an emphasis on working for good corporate citizens. The successful companies of the future will listen to their high-flying people and be prepared to respond thoughtfully, creatively and flexibly.”



## Case study

### A trailblazing approach to skills development



**Katie Nightingale, Early Careers Manager, Kier Group**

We know from our engagement survey that career development and progression are very important to our people, and that good

development opportunities play a key role in retention. We have recently undertaken a strategic workforce planning project to ensure that our development programmes match the future needs of the business. This project helped us identify areas where we need to prioritise skills development, such as in our supply chain and in digital innovation.

Apprenticeships play a key role in our strategic workforce planning as the flexibility of the trailblazer approach, where groups of employers collaborate to build new apprenticeship standards, allows us to create specific training for skills we know our business needs now and in the future.

For example, we recently became the first major contractor to take on digital construction apprentices under a pioneering new programme, which builds on the Digital Engineering Technician apprenticeship standard and will focus on applying building information modelling.

Within this structured and supported two-year programme, apprentices will undertake a varied and fascinating mix of courses – from technology and design in construction and civil engineering to sustainable construction and health, safety and welfare. As well as resulting in a Level 3 qualification, completion of this course will provide further opportunities to gain membership to a range of professional institutions.

The quality of applicants for this course was fantastic, testament to the high value of the skills it trains in the workplace, both for employees in building their career and to our business.



## Case study

### People-driven growth at Pricecheck



#### Close personal attention to employee development plays a central role in Pricecheck's fast growth story.

Founded in Sheffield in 1978, Pricecheck is a specialist distributor of branded excess inventory and fast-moving consumer goods

throughout the UK and worldwide. This family-owned business is currently growing fast, with employee numbers expected to exceed 200 over the next few years – over the last three years Pricecheck has doubled its workforce.

HR Manager Lucy Goddard explains that finding, developing and then keeping the right people is essential to growth, particularly given the unique nature of what the company does.

For Pricecheck, employee retention is integral to its growth strategy. As Lucy says: “We can’t meet our ambitions by doing the same things. And if you don’t invest in people, you’re forever chasing your tail. If people leave because they don’t feel stretched and fulfilled, then all you’re doing is replacing them rather than adding people and skills for growth.”

Pricecheck operates according to the philosophy of developing people so that they become very employable – but then creating a work environment that they feel motivated to stay in. Its approach to training is to consider the specific development needs of the individual.

Lucy cites some examples. Jack, a geography graduate, had qualities ideal for the buying team but didn’t hold a driving licence for a role that involves a lot of time on the motorway, so Pricecheck funded the lessons he needed. Pricecheck is also sending Nic (who has worked at the company for 20 years and learned most of her international logistic skills on the job) on a training course to refresh her knowledge on the main elements of import/export administration, which will add to her qualifications while also bringing additional challenge to her role.

The specialised nature of the business means that its development programmes also have to be tailored. Lucy says: “Some professional qualifications, like the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS) for our buyers, don’t work for our business, so we put a lot of effort into specific on-the-job training. Buyers, for example, work alongside the sales team, which helps them see where they fit in and also builds their negotiation skills.”

#### Lucy concludes:

“It can be quite scary, thinking you might invest all that time and effort only to lose people. But because we know people as individuals and take an interest in where they want to take their careers, that motivates them to stay.”

### Things to consider in keeping talent and skills in a rapid growth environment:

- Are you measuring the effectiveness of your learning programmes in terms of the progression and retention of your people?
- How are you identifying the specific development needs of your people? Is your approach to talent development flexible enough to accommodate them?
- Are your learning and development programmes aligned to the skills needed for the future growth of your business?
- Which training organisations, partners, clients or peers could you collaborate with to build tailored apprenticeships to meet specific skills demands?

## Challenge four

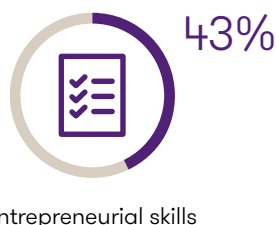
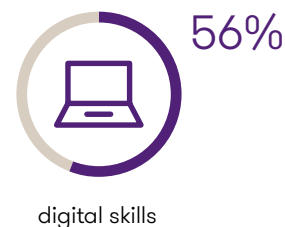
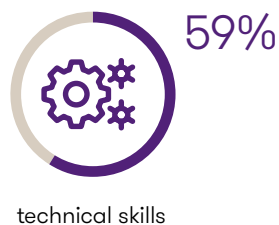
# Equipping your people to be more than machines

The workplace of the future needs people who have the specialist technical skills to develop and manage technologies that help business function. But it also needs people to do the things that machines can't, such as think creatively, show empathy, work as a team and adapt quickly to change.

Employers are most likely to invest in technical and professional skills. But how can you develop continuous learning programmes to help your people cultivate the skills that can't be replicated by machines?

The pace of technological change means that employing people who can simply 'do the job' is not enough. Employers need creative minds that can bring innovative thought and different ways of doing things. This is key to maintaining productivity and profitability in challenging market conditions. Our research shows that companies experiencing significant growth are more aware of the importance of recruiting for and developing non-technical skills that encompass entrepreneurialism and empathy, as this helps foster a better growth culture.

UK employers say the most valuable skills for building a future career are:<sup>14</sup>



<sup>14</sup> Censuswide survey of 1,000 employers, Grant Thornton, 2018





## Case study

### Common Purpose: Cultural Intelligence

In a disrupted, fluid, fast-changing environment, organisations need their leaders to tackle challenges and grasp opportunities that do not fit neatly within the boundaries of a team, department, function, organisation or sector.

Leadership development provider Common Purpose provides cultural intelligence training that can give leaders the ability to thrive in different cultures. Ninety-seven percent of people have seen the benefit of this type of training as they are able to make the most of diversity in their teams. The programme, called streetwise mba, helps leaders to become more inclusive and agile, lead diverse teams, serve a variety of customers and work with different stakeholders. Every streetwise mba includes participants who are emerging leaders: all from different backgrounds and with hugely varied experiences, across the public, private and NGO sectors.

Steve Morley is Business Development Director at Mitie Care & Custody, which provides immigration detention services to the Home Office. He speaks about his experiences on the streetwise mba:

“As an emerging leader within a business that delivers public services to a diverse range of stakeholders and continues to grow at pace, I was searching for new tools and working

practices that would enable me to refine my leadership style. At the same time, I needed to support my team to deliver the best results for the business by creating an inclusive and agile working environment.

“The streetwise mba provided me with a unique opportunity to work collaboratively with participants from hugely varied backgrounds and cultures, and meet established leaders with a wealth of experience, to broaden my understanding and reflect upon my own cultural intelligence.

“Having the space to properly reflect, outside of the hustle and bustle of the normal work environment, whilst exposing myself to new outlooks and environments proved to be invaluable.

“Since I attended the Common Purpose programme, I have been able to consistently reflect upon and challenge my core values and have been more open, flexible and effective in delivering projects involving people from different backgrounds and cultures.”

In 2017, Common Purpose delivered programmes for over 5,000 leaders, and across all their programmes 93% of emerging leaders said they were better able to build relationships as a result.<sup>15</sup>

### Things to consider to equip your people to be more than machines:

- What more could you be doing to foster early links with educators in order to develop a pipeline of talent into your business?
- Do your leaders take enough time out of the day-to-day to concentrate on things like leadership style, focus and priorities?
- What programmes do you invest in to equip your people with leadership and teamwork skills? Does your workplace environment support and nurture these skills?
- Are your senior leaders equipped to maximise the opportunities and tackle the challenges that leading in a digital world might present? Are your learning and development programmes addressing this challenge?

# How we can help

## People advisory

At Grant Thornton, we see people as the critical driver for future productivity and sustainable, long-term success. Our services help you make sure your business has the talent and skills in place to drive growth. Our offering includes:

- **people strategy** covering culture assessment and transformation, leadership development, employee value proposition, organisational effectiveness and HR function and systems
- **skills development** including Apprenticeship Levy advisory, learning and development design and delivery, skills gap assessments and talent development programmes
- **employer solutions** including reward advisory, employee benefits and payroll compliance and efficiency.

For further information, please contact:



**Justin Rix**  
Partner, Talent Solutions  
T +44 (0)20 7728 2937  
E [justin.rix@uk.gt.com](mailto:justin.rix@uk.gt.com)

## Recruitment and talent industry experts

We work closely with organisations in the recruitment and talent industry to provide professional advice and expertise that supports their strategy. This includes corporate finance, business recovery, tax and audit. We offer a hands-on approach, grounded in the real-world, commercial views, with the capability to work on a national or international stage.

For further information, please contact:



**Keely Woodley**  
Partner, Human Capital  
T +44 (0)79 6762 2934  
E [keely.a.woodley@uk.gt.com](mailto:keely.a.woodley@uk.gt.com)



**Marc Summers**  
Partner, Audit  
T +44 (0)20 7728 2605  
E [marc.summers@uk.gt.com](mailto:marc.summers@uk.gt.com)

## Growth 365

Growth 365 is a tailored service for ambitious CEOs and leaders of mid-market businesses. We help you focus on and drive the key business activities that will unlock your business success. With the support of growth advisers, technical specialists and analysts, we can provide guidance on the alignment of business and people strategy.

For further information, please contact:



**Simon Littlewood**  
Partner, Growth Services  
T +44 (0)20 7728 2931  
E [simon.littlewood@uk.gt.com](mailto:simon.littlewood@uk.gt.com)



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GRT108816